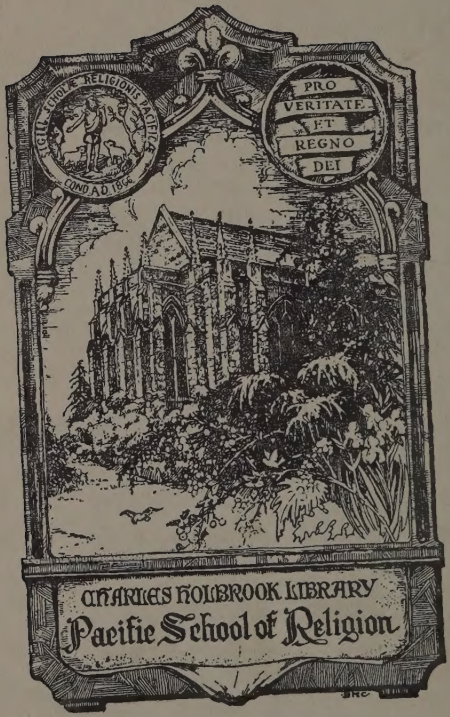
The Visions and Labors of the Pioneers

DAVID LIPSCOMB COLLEGE
NASHVILLE, TENN.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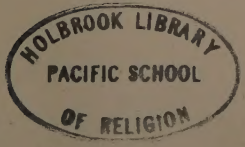

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Introduction

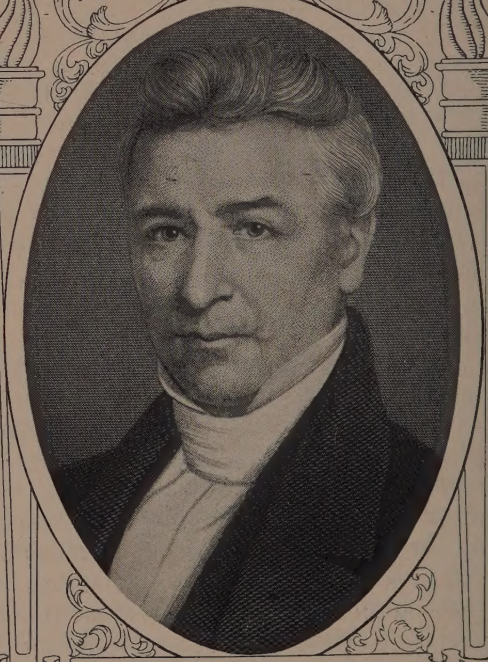
No greater theme can engage the attention of thoughtful people today than the ideals and visions of true education. Ideals in education which may be reached and visions which may be realized are to be found in the scope of the present subject. Nothing marks an advance in civilization or in church work more than an education; nothing marks the steps of progress with more definiteness of any religious people than its attitude toward education. Any people, religious or otherwise, who love education have the elements of success and advancement within their reach.

The Visions and Labors of the Pioneers

The progress of any religious body today may be measured by its educational institutions; the standing of any religious people is to be determined by their attitude toward education and educational institutions. Any religious people that oppose education and will not support their educational institutions are doomed to die.

The Origin of the Idea

When Alexander Campbell began to preach eloquently and fearlessly a full Gospel as the world had not heard it since the departure from the New Testament order of things, the need for education in the field of religious life was seen with a clearer vision than ever before. Many accepted the Gospel who had a burning desire to tell "the old, old story" to others, but were not able to preach it with power and influence because of the lack of education. Mr. Campbell saw the need of a better preparation on the part of teachers and preachers. The idea of true education developed in his mind until it took definite form and found concrete expression in the founding of Bethany College in West Virginia. Young men of great native ability were soon attracted to this institution of learning and there received a train-



ALEXANDER CAMPBELL

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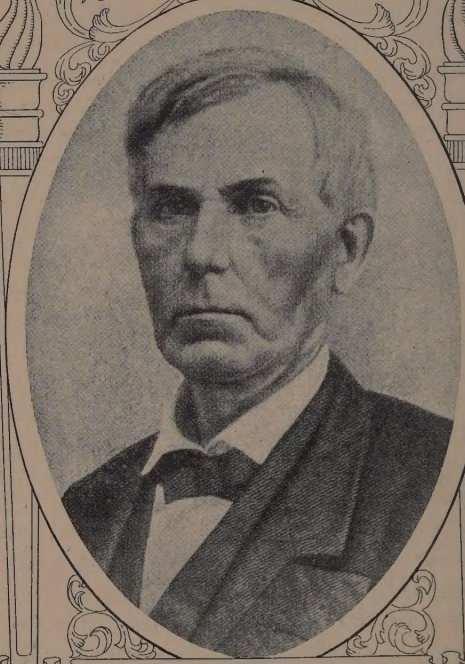
ing which prepared them for the great work of spreading the Gospel. These young men were trained under Mr. Campbell's guidance not only in the sciences, arts, and languages of the day, but many of them received instruction in the Bible. Young men who were well equipped in literary training and even better trained in heart went out from Bethany College and preached the Gospel in its ancient simplicity and power with such effect that thousands turned from the theories of men and the entangling alliances of denominationalism. What is known in history as "The Restoration Movement" spread so rapidly that within one-half of a century five hundred thousand precious souls accepted the truth and began worshipping and working as the New Testament directs. This movement to restore the New Testament Church with its work and worship soon took its place among the large and popular religious bodies and by its merits demanded the respect and confidence of all. The work at Bethany College was a very important factor in the happy results of this movement.

Tolbert Fanning

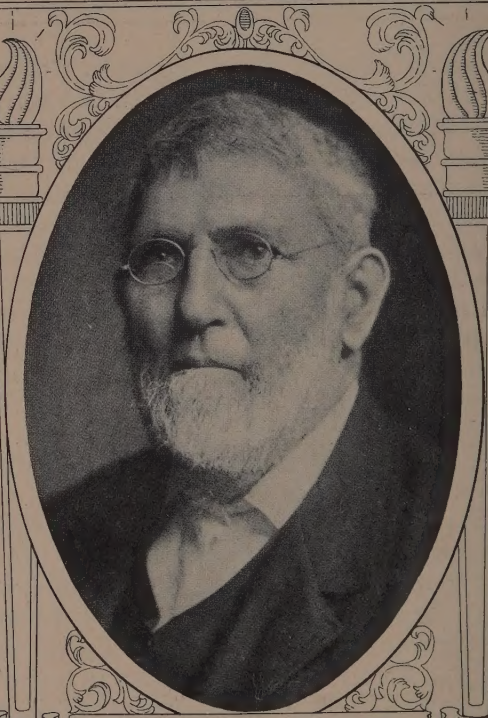
In our own section of the country Tolbert Fanning caught the vision of the place of education in spreading Christianity and founded Franklin



TOLBERT FANNING

In our own section of the country Tolbert Fanning caught the vision of the place of education in spreading Christianity and founded Franklin College near Nashville, Tenn.

College near Nashville, Tenn. He enlarged upon the idea of Christian education which was started by Alexander Campbell. Franklin College became a very important factor in the training of young men who loved the Lord and were educated in such a way as to become useful and serviceable in spreading Christianity throughout the Southland. Many noble young men went out from this college and did yeoman service in spreading Christianity and establishing churches. Among those who received their training under his guidance were: James E. Scobey, David Lipscomb, E. G. Sewell and T. B. Larimore; a little later E. A. Elam and others were trained in the same institution under A. J. Fanning. These men were, and some of them still are, mighty powers for righteousness and leaders in the great cause of Christian education. If Franklin College had never done anything more than to train David Lipscomb and E. G. Sewell, it could be counted a great success; if it had done nothing more than to train T. B. Larimore and E. A. Elam, it was worth the efforts invested in it by great and Godly men. No one can estimate the good that any one of these faithful men who received their training there has done; neither can anyone calculate what the result of this institution has meant to the cause of Christ in the South.



DAVID LIPSCOMB

The idea of Christian education first planted by Alexander Campbell and then enlarged in the vision of Tolbert Fanning found its fullest and freest application in the broad vision and practical life of David Lipscomb when he founded the old "Nashville Bible School," now David Lipscomb College.

David Lipscomb

The idea of Christian education first planted by Alexander Campbell and then enlarged in the vision of Tolbert Fanning found its fullest and freest application in the broad vision and practical life of David Lipscomb when he founded the old "Nashville Bible School," now David Lipscomb College. The vision for Christian education abroad in the brotherhood now is due in a large measure to the foresight and sacrifice of David Lipscomb.

The Nashville Bible School had a small beginning; only a few young men met David Lipscomb and J. A. Harding the morning of October 5, 1891, in Nashville, Tenn., to begin the school. This number grew slowly and gradually until a large number received part, or all, of their training in this institution. These young men went out into the broad field with messages clear and definite, hearts trained to sacrifice and serve, and they established churches in many sections of the country. Many churches today can point to the services of these young men as their beginning.

These young men went out with a determination to bring to pass the vision gained while they were students of the Nashville Bible School.

Some of them founded other schools, such as Beamsville College, Ontario, Canada; Potter Bible College in Kentucky, Odessa Bible College in Missouri, Harper College in Kansas, County Line School in Arkansas, Cordell Christian College in Oklahoma, Sabinal Christian College, Thorp Springs, Gunter and Abilene Christian College, all in Texas. All of these founders received their vision and inspiration from J. A. Harding and David Lipscomb; nearly all of these colleges and schools have been directed by leaders who were trained in the Nashville Bible School, now David Lipscomb College.

The idea of Christian education has gradually enlarged and expanded until nearly every state in the union and many foreign countries have been blessed by the influence, sacrifice, and labors of men and women who love Christian education.

Present Conditions

There was a need for the institution of the Nashville Bible School when it was founded; that need has not been diminished; it has been augmented. There is a greater need today for emphasis to be put upon Christian education than ever before. So many of our schools and colleges of today are honeycombed with infidelity. The

faith of our youth in God is being undermined; the Bible is being ridiculed and Christianity is derided; the Church of our Lord is mocked in many of the schools and colleges of today. The trend of much of the education of today is away from God and all that is sacred and holy. So strong are the forces of infidelity in some educational institutions that our youth can scarcely pass through them without coming out "with the smell of fire upon their garments." What can save our young people from such a Godless education?

Two concrete efforts of David Lipscomb and his co-laborers have blessed our fair Southland. These are the Gospel Advocate and David Lipscomb College. For nearly fifty years, a half century, David Lipscomb labored through the columns of the Gospel Advocate to teach the primitive Gospel as God's power to save; through its columns he kept the New Testament pattern of church work and worship before the public; the Gospel Advocate has been a mighty force for the Church of our Lord in the South.

David Lipscomb College has been no less effective in its far-reaching influence; boys and girls have been trained in this institution and have gone out into all parts of the country. It may be truly said "the sun never sets on the alumni of

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J. A. HARDING

All of the founders of the various schools and colleges throughout the brotherhood received their vision and inspiration from J. A. Harding and David Lipscomb. Nearly all of these colleges and schools have been directed by leaders who were trained in the "Nashville Bible School," now David Lipscomb College.

David Lipscomb College." No one for a moment would disparage the work that it has done, nor the work that it is now doing; yet, it has not done what it should have done, neither is it doing now what it should do or could do if it were better equipped.

There is not a college among us teaching the Bible that is doing what it ought to do. We need to catch the vision of the ever-expanding work that should be done and imbibe the spirit of sacrifice that influenced the pioneers in Christian education, and make these institutions what it is possible for them to be. Their influence could be increased a hundred fold by a very small sacrifice on the part of every member of the Church of God. When we think of the good that has been done through these institutions, and then think of what they might have done, had they been better equipped and more faithfully supported, we are caused to wonder why people everywhere are not anxious to lay on the altar of Christian education a liberal sacrifice. We are caused to wonder why every member of the body of Christ does not want to perpetuate these institutions and help in every programme for their enlargement and expansion.

Everyone should be thrilled with the thought of the possibilities of these institutions for accom-

plishing good. It is a deep conviction of many that the cause of Christ would grow by leaps and bounds if even our present institutions were equipped as they should be for the education and training of our young people. Think what it means to turn out into the world every year a thousand young men and young women firm in the faith and trained in mind and heart and life to live as God directs his children! Think what it would mean to the Church even if five hundred young men yearly were trained and developed with a Christian education and turned out to labor, sacrifice, and suffer in preaching the Gospel to the world! Think what it would mean to all of the churches if one thousand young men and young women were trained each year with a Christian education and sent back home to become mighty forces in the home congregations! The churches would take on new life; they would double their efforts in preaching the Gospel and serving the community in which they are located. A little material sacrifice on the part of many, or all, would so equip and furnish David Lipscomb College until it would fill its mission and meet all of the requirements of the present age. It would be better able to serve the youth of our age if it were so equipped and would multiply its blessings a hundred fold to the entire country.

Our Advantages

When Alexander Campbell and Tolbert Fanning founded Bethany College and Franklin College, they had but small means for doing the work. The ages in which they lived did not demand such elaborate equipment as is required and needed today. Even when David Lipscomb and J. A. Harding founded the Nashville Bible School, only meager equipment was necessary.

But times have changed. Institutions cannot be maintained now without adequate equipment; standard work cannot be given now and due recognition cannot be obtained for work done now unless the colleges are better equipped. People had not been trained to give liberally then as they are now; neither were material blessings so bounteous as they are now. The sacrifices of the few then were great in founding these institutions; far greater sacrifice should be made today by all who have been blessed by the influence of the institutions in their earlier days.

We are better prepared to equip adequately David Lipscomb College now than ever before. Our material prosperity is such that out of our abundance we can give liberally and still not make the sacrifices which were made by the older brethren. We should be as willing to make these

sacrifices as others have been. It seems that the most lasting and permanent good can be done in the training of our youth for the service of humanity and the glory of God. The best investment—that which will yield the greatest income—is that investment in Christian education for the training of boys and girls. We should catch the vision of others and be inspired by the possibilities of the good which we can do in fostering and equipping our institutions of learning where students are trained in all the useful arts and sciences, and above all taught the Word of God daily.

We should thank God for the opportunity given us to serve him in the field of Christian education; we should thank him for the opportunity of the large channel through which to bless humanity. We should pray him to increase our blessings and multiply our opportunities for honoring him with our substance. We should thank him for the prosperous age in which we live and for the bountiful means which he has placed in our hands; we should ask him for wisdom to guide us in using all of these blessings in that large way that will redound to his glory and honor and the education of our young people. We should say like Isaiah, his servant of old, "Lord, here am I; send me."

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